

TRANSCRIPT OF ELECTION SPEECH

CANBERRA

4 AUGUST 2013

E & O E – PROOF ONLY

PM: Good afternoon. This afternoon I visited the Governor-General and Her Excellency has accepted my advice an election be held on Saturday the 7th of September.

The time has come for the Australian people to decide on our Nation's future.

Because they are the ones who we in this Parliament are elected to serve.

Ours is a truly great country. Nobody should ever talk this country down.

Around the world we are seen as one of the best countries on the planet.

Blessed with a strong economy, a hardworking, talented and creative people and a people who will never surrender their deep sense of a fair go for all.

These are the values which have steered our nation through the first century of its federation.

And I believe they are the values which will guide us into the future as well.

Australia is too open and positive a nation to retreat into a tight little ball of negativity.

This election will be about who the Australian people trust to best lead them through the difficult new economic challenges which now lie ahead.

New challenges brought about the end of the China resources boom.

New challenges also that have to be confronted.

The boom, of course, has fuelled so much of our nation's wealth. That boom is over.

This election will also be about who the Australian people trust to steer our economy through the great economic transition that therefore lies ahead.

If as a nation we fail to manage this transition well, it will hurt the jobs and living standards of all Australians.

So this election will be about who the Australian people best judge to get the balance right.

By keeping our economy strong while at the same time, protecting jobs, ensuring we have fair wages and fair conditions, continuing to invest in health and education and above all ensuring there's a fair go for all.

Managing the big economic transition that lies ahead will be difficult – but it is definitely do-able.

Charting a course through the choppy economic waters that lie ahead will require a steady hand, and a clear cut plan for the future.

The new challenges facing our economy will require new ways of thinking, new ways of acting, new ways of planning.

One thing I know for certain is that the old politics of the past just won't work for the future.

Wall to wall negativity doesn't create a single new job. Negative personal politics doesn't build a single new school. The old politics of division doesn't build a single hospital.

Clinging to the past is not going help build a National Broadband Network of the future.

Three word slogans won't solve complex problems. They never have. And they never will.

So Australia needs a new way of dealing with the new challenges we face in the future.

And at this election the Australian people will decide who they trust best to navigate the way through.

So that we can have our absolute best shot at maintaining our living standards, and our prosperity and our security.

But also on top of that, unlocking the potential which lies in each individual member of the great Australian family - so that we become the best we possibly can.

For me, all that was made possible some 30 or so years ago when reforms by an earlier Labor Government made it possible for a kid from the Queensland country, neither of whose parents went much beyond past primary school, to go off to university and chart his own future and end up as Prime Minister of the country.

Elections are about judgements of our record just as they are about our plans for the future.

In the years we have been in office, we have helped keep our economy strong.

While economies around the world have lost tens of millions of jobs, businesses in Australia have added just under one million jobs over the last five and a half years.

While economies around the world tumbled into recession, we in this country, Australia acting with business have kept the economy out of recession, almost uniquely across the developed countries of the world.

And while others continue to make false claims that somehow this country is in a debt and deficit crisis, they can never answer this simple question: if that is the case, why does Australia among only eight countries in the world continue to have a Triple-A credit rating and stable outlook.

Nor can they answer why the Australian Government debt per head of population is one of the lowest across all the developed countries in the world.

It just doesn't add up. It's a false claim and it should be named and nailed as such through this campaign.

Of course the business of government is more than managing the economy – although that for me is fundamental.

The economy must be strong in order to do everything else.

We have also kept our economy strong through a series of carefully costed policies during the most difficult of global economic circumstances.

This has required hard decisions, like the ones you saw announced last week in the government's economic statement released by the Treasurer and the Finance Minister.

I believe it is far better we level with the Australian people about the tough choices we have made, rather than pretend you can somehow wave a magic wand and create \$70 billion out of nowhere.

I have already said we've made our mistakes in the past. That's true.

All governments do, even though most tend not to admit it. The key is to learn from experience.

I said before that elections are both about our record and about our plans for the future.

On the economy, with the end of the China resources boom, we can no longer afford to have all our eggs just in one basket.

For the future we must broaden the economic base, diversify our economy.

This will be critical for business, for jobs and for managing cost of living pressures for families as well.

That's why the government has embraced a new national competitiveness agenda for the future and a new way of bringing business, unions and government around one table to deal with our common national interests, which should be much greater and more important than the individual interests of any of us.

That's why we also need to invigorate our manufacturing – which I believe to be an industry of the future, not as some believe an industry just of the past.

That's why we need fresh investment in agribusiness because there are rich opportunities for Australia in satisfying the new food demands of Asia.

That's why we also need the great new economic enabling power of the National Broadband Network – to help lift our national competitiveness even further.

This is the way to build the new industries of the future – right across our vital new service industries as well which provide so many jobs for Australians.

And doing so by responsibly returning the budget to surplus over the economic cycle.

Supported by moderate budget savings, which don't hit jobs, health or education.

That's our economic plan for the future.

Mr Abbott's plan by contrast is a \$70 billion slash and burn austerity drive which will cut jobs and cut deeply into basic services in health and education.

And if you don't believe me on this, have a look at what Mr Newman's Liberal National Party government has just done in Queensland – where they said nothing about it upfront, they said they'd have a "Commission of Audit" and then low and behold, 4000 health workers were then sacked in one state alone.

In my community in Brisbane, I have met so many of these folks working in the health sector who just lost their jobs. Good people, decent people and I've met them right across Queensland.

On education, we have launched a Better Schools plan.

A massive \$15 billion investment in government, Catholic and independent schools starting next year so that principals will now have the funds to provide more individual attention for our kids when they need it.

And the teachers in my local schools in Brisbane tell me it is fantastic plan.

Unfortunately, Mr Abbott has said our Better Schools Plan is nothing more than a con, without putting forward a positive alternative.

On health and hospitals, we intend to complete the massive health and hospitals reform plan that we have agreed to at the Commonwealth and the states, massively investing into the hospitals of our country into the future, delivering new services through the National Broadband Network, such as telemedicine as well as providing local health services through our Medicare Local network.

Unfortunately Mr Abbott has form on hospitals, when previously he ripped one billion dollars out of the nation's health system as Health Minister. Now says he will abolish Medicare Local.

We will also roll out DisabilityCare Australia – our first national disability insurance scheme.

And on climate change, our plans are clear while Mr Abbott, a climate change denier from way back, has an approach he has never properly explained and it does not work.

The Australian people therefore face a real choice for this election. A real choice.

A choice between a new way for the future - with positive plans for managing the economic challenges we face – as opposed to the old negative politics and three word slogans of the past.

A choice between a positive plan to invest in new industries, new jobs, health and education - rather than a \$70 billion dollar slash and burn exercise which cuts to the bone.

A positive plan to connect all businesses and families, right across Australia, to the National Broadband Network rather than one that effectively destroys the NBN and charges households thousands of dollars each to be connected potentially.

The choice also between bringing the nation together behind a positive plan that most of us would readily agree to as opposed to an approach which tends instead to rip the country apart and to polarise it.

That's not my way, that's not my approach, I also don't believe it's the Australian way.

Australians by their nature are a positive, practical people who believe in nation building and that approach is part and parcel of the values, ideas and policies we bring to bear for Australia's future.

You the Australian people over the years have seen me at my highest highs, and some of my lowest lows.

You have witnessed some of those moments right here, in the place we are standing now in Parliament House in Canberra.

Moments that I will never forget, because whether they were good or bad, they have certainly made me a much stronger person.

I think as a result, you the Australian people, know me pretty well – warts and all.

I would be deeply honoured to serve you, the Australian people and our country into the future.

I know I enter this election as the underdog.

In fact my political advisers tell me if we had an election yesterday, Mr Abbott would be Prime Minister as of today.

In the month or so ahead, the people of Australia are going to be subjected an absolute barrage of negative political advertising such as they have never seen before, full of daily political personal attacks.

Mr Abbott's advertising campaign will be massive, funded by massive was chest he has amassed from a whole range of vested interests in industry, not least, the tobacco companies.

So the next month or so is going to be a pretty rough one I think.

That's why I am asking you, the Australian people, those of who support a new way of handling the challenges we face in the future to come on board.

We need each and every one of you to volunteer your time, your effort, your enthusiasm and maybe even send us a \$10 donation.

Young people. Old people. Women and Men. Eighth generation Australians or migrants who only arrived in this country in the last year or so.

Because it is only through the power of you the people that we will prevail in this election.

I have enormous confidence in the sound judgement of the Australian people.

I deeply respect our democratic processes.

And it is now time for the Australian people to decide.

ENDS